

THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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ines Isa. 60:1–3 and points in particular to the concentration of verbs meaning “appear” in Dt. 33:2 (*bôʾ*, *zārach*, *hôphîaʾ*, *ʾāthāh*), concluding that the appearance of the sun-god was transferred to Yahweh.⁴ In Isa. 58:10 we have the very common image of light as a symbol of good fortune: anyone who espouses the cause of the poor will have good fortune.

Mal. 3:20(4:2), on the contrary, strikes an almost mythological note: the sun of righteousness rises with healing in its wings. The image recalls the winged sun disk, a familiar element in Egyptian, Hittite, Akkadian, and Iranian religion.⁵ Apart from this image, we have here the usual association of light with good fortune, life, and health.

The use of light terminology like *zārach* in connection with Yahweh has led to the hypothesis that Yahweh is in a certain sense a sun-god,⁶ as the successor of the Canaanite El Elyon, who supposedly was a sun-god.⁷ The basis of this theory is that Yahweh frequently reveals himself in light and splendor. One can walk in the light of his countenance (Isa. 60:3; Ps. 89:16[15]; cf. Isa. 2:5: *bʾôʾr yhvʾh*; *ʾôʾr pānekha* “had, in the ancient Israelite view, a very specific meaning”⁸). In Ps. 84:12(11), Yahweh is called *shemesh*. His theophany is associated with the term *nōghah*, “brightness” (Hab. 3:4; Isa. 60:3; Ezk. 10:4).⁹ The verbs most commonly used to describe a theophany, *hôphîaʾ* and *zārach* (Dt. 33:2; Ps. 50:2; 94:1; Isa. 60:1f.), are also used of the sun.¹⁰ In addition, *tiphʾereth*, which frequently appears in connection with Yahweh, is said to mean “radiance” (Isa. 28:1, 4f.; 60:19) and to suggest the solar character of Yahweh¹¹—but these four occurrences stand against some fifty others, and only in Isa. 60:19 is there any association with the sun.

The association of Yahweh with radiance and light is clear beyond any doubt. But—with the exception of Ps. 84:12(11), which can also be translated differently¹²—it is never stated explicitly that this radiance has anything to do with the sun. In addition, the solar character of El Elyon is just an hypothesis; there is no clear evidence in its support. In this context the personal name *zʾrachyāh*, “Yahweh has shined forth,” should possibly also be mentioned.¹³

III. mizrāch. The noun *mizrāch* means initially “the place where the sun rises,” by extension “east.” The construct phrase *mizrach (hash)shemesh* is used frequently, but in most cases only in a geographical sense without any special emphasis on the meaning “sunrise”; it means merely “east,” “eastward,” etc. (Nu. 21:11; Dt. 4:47;

⁴Cf. the hymns to Shamash in *SAHG*, 240ff., 250ff.

⁵See G. E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (1973), 33ff.

⁶G. W. Ahlström, *Psalms 89* (1959), 85ff., 92ff.

⁷A. R. Johnson, “The Rôle of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus,” in S. H. Hooke, ed., *The Labyrinth* (1935), 81ff., 96.

⁸Ahlström, *Psalms 89*, 85.

⁹*Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 88; as was shown above, this holds true for *zārach* but not for *hôphîaʾ*, which never has the sun as its subject.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 92.

¹²See the commentaries.

¹³*IPN*, 184.

Josh. 1:15; 13:5; 2 K. 10:33; etc.). In Josh. 19:12 we find the combination *qēdhmāh mizrach hashshemesh*.

Sunrise and sunset (*mābhô'*) occur as terms for the uttermost ends of the earth: Yahweh summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting, i.e., the whole world (Ps. 50:1). From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of Yahweh is praised (Ps. 113:3) or is great among the nations (Mal. 1:11). Men shall know in the east (*mizrach shemesh*) and in the west (*ma'arābh*) that Yahweh alone is God (Isa. 45:6); his name and his glory will be feared in the west (*ma'arābh*) and at the rising of the sun (*mizrach shemesh*), i.e., throughout the world (Isa. 59:19). Similar expressions also occur without *shemesh*: from the north to the east (Am. 8:12); "your offspring will assemble from the east and from the west," i.e., from points of the compass (Isa. 43:5); people will come from the east and from the west and from the sea to give thanks to Yahweh (Ps. 107:3). As a symbol of extreme distance we find "east and west" in parallel with "heaven and earth" (Ps. 103:11f.): Yahweh removes our transgressions as far from us as the east is from the west.

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זֶרַע *zerem* → מֵטָר *mātār*

זָרַע *zāra'*; זֶרַע *zera'*

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I. Occurrences, Range of Meanings, Semantic Field.

1. *Verb*. The verb *zāra'* occurs 56 times in the Hebrew OT: 46 times in the qal, 6 times in the niphal, and 3 times (Gen. 1:11f.; Lev. 12:2 [P]) in the hiphil. In addition, the form *zorā'û* in Isa. 40:24 should probably be taken as a pual rather than a qal

zāra'. *AuS*, II (1932), 130ff.; cf. also I (1928), 261ff., 400ff.; J. de Fraine, *Adam and the Family of Man* (trans. 1965); P. Fronzaroli, "Studi sul lessico comune semitico," *AANLR*, 19 (1964), 259, 273; F. Hecht, *Eschatologie und Ritus bei den 'Reformpropheten.'* *PThS*, 1 (1971); L. Kopf, "Arabische Etymologien und Parallelen zum Bibelwörterbuch," *VT*, 8 (1958), 161-215, esp. 168; G. Quell, "σπέρμα," *TDNT*, VII, 536-543; J. Scharbert, *Solidarität in Segen und Fluch im AT und in seiner Umwelt. BBB*, 14 (1958); G. Wehmeier, *Der Segen im AT. Theol.Diss.*, 6 (1970), 199ff.